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# Government department to sacrifice Model UN

By [Monika Sabic](#)  
October 28, 2016

Mills' Model United Nations (UN) might hit the chopping block in light of the continued budget crisis that plagues the college.

Department sources say no academic departments have received their official budgets for the 2017 fiscal year. Without receiving this year's budget, the government department does not know if it has the budget line item funds for the Model UN. As a result, the program may need to be sacrificed.

According to Head of the Government Department and International Relations Professor Fred Lawson, as of Oct. 12, the government department still has not received its funding. Budgets allocated to departments go towards discretionary funding, funding for student entertainment and special lectures that were previously provided.

"We think it is an important and useful program, but given all the other things that the College might need to fund, I can imagine that Model UN would not be at the top of the list," Lawson said.

The Model UN was a club with a class component; students had the option to take it for credit. By the end of the semester, eight to 10 Model UN students would travel to Washington D.C., previously to New York, to represent both Mills and their international country in a UN simulation with other colleges and universities. Last year, under the direction of Professor Martha Johnson, the Model UN represented the country Chad.

"I think [cutting Model UN] hurts student experience; I think it hurts broad student background in politics," Lawson said. "It is certainly true that you can't learn many important things about politics in a book and this provides some practical experience."

In the past, the government department would have a separate fund of \$8,000 for Model UN participants that would include airfare, lodging and conference costs. The department's separate funding did not cover the entire estimated \$10,000 cost of the program, leaving the group to fundraise and go to ASMC to seek special funding. Every year though, the department would have a line item designated towards the group.

Kahler Verrill, treasurer for Model UN, was one of the representatives who petitioned ASMC for special funding. According to the Oct. 15, 2015 ASMC meeting minutes, Verrill and the Model UN President petitioned for \$294.74 per student for 10 students; a total of \$2,947. The ASMC executive board's vote passed for the full special funding.

Verrill believes her time on Model UN was a valuable experience for her resume. The experience helped improve her writing and public speaking skills. Now, Verrill feels more confident in time for graduate school and job interviews.


"When I was interviewing for internships I would always bring up my Model UN experience because most internships would want to know that you can work with others," Verrill said. "The whole purpose of Model UN is to collaborate with others, negotiate and come to agreeable terms with everyone."

The Model UN had been supported by the College for many years, even after other budget lines were cut or

eliminated. Lawson hopes that the program will be at the “top of the list of things that get reinstated as soon as the College’s finances recover.”

In the meantime, Lawson and the government department are open to meeting with students, who are either concerned or interested in joining Model UN, to strategize a plan to pursue outside funding.

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